

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ML

SUBJ: POLITICAL SITUATION IN MALI: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

REF: BAMA KO 1339

(BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED)

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT TRAORE PROMISES ESTABLISHMENT OF PARTY POLITICS AS SCHEDULED, NEW MINISTERIAL CABINET, AND RETURN OF GOODS CONFISCATED FROM ARRESTED OFFICIALS TO THE PEOPLE. CITIZENS DISREGARD FOR POLICE INCREASINGLY EVIDENT AS CAMPAIGN OF INCRIMINATION AGAINST COUP PLOTTERS CONTINUES. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENTIAL INTERVIEW. MALIAN PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE, IN INTERVIEW GRANTED MALIAN PRESS AND PUBLISHED MARCH 30 IN OFFICIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DAILY L'ESSOR, ANSWERED QUESTIONS PROMINENT IN MALIAN CIRCLES SINCE HE PRE-EMPTED A COUP ATTEMPT ON FEBRUARY 18. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT, WHATEVER HAPPENS, ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC UNION OF MALIAN PEOPLE (UDPM) WOULD PROCEED ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE. THE OBJECTIVE OF RETURN TO "NORMAL CONSTITUTIONAL LIFE" WOULD BE FULLY ACHIEVED. PRESIDENT NOTED THAT EX-MINISTER OF DEFENSE DOUKARA AND EX-DIRECTOR OF SECURITY SERVICES BAGAYOKO

WERE CHIEF OPPONENTS, WITHIN MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION (CMLN), OR RE-ESTABLISHING PARTY POLITICS AND, IF THEIR COUP HAD SUCCEEDED, WOULD HAVE BURIED CONSTITUTION AND SET UP FASCIST DICTATORSHIP.

3. PRESIDENT ALSO NOTED THAT, BECAUSE OF VACANCIES CAUSED BY RECENT ARRESTS, MINISTERIAL REALIGNMENT MUST OCCUR. BUT, HE ADDED, GREAT TASK OF RE-ORGANIZATION AND RECOVERY REQUIRES THAT NEW MINISTERIAL TEAM NOT BE CHOSEN PRECIPITATELY. EFFECTIVENESS WILL BE MAIN CRITERION IN SELECTING NEW MINISTERS.

4. PRESIDENT SAID THAT NEW NATIONAL INQUIRY COMMISSION CAN USE ANY LEGAL MEANS TO DETERMINE THE WEALTH OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE COUP PLOT. ANY GOODS RECOVERED, SINCE THEY WERE ACQUIRED OFF THE BACKS OF THE PEOPLE, WOULD BE PUT AT THE DISPOSITION OF THE PEOPLE.

5. POLICE PROBLEMS. CMLN SECRETARY-GEMZRAL, LIEUTENANT COLONEL FILIFING SISSOKO, MET MARCH 28 WITH BAMAKO MUNICIPAL DISTRICT CHIEFS AND LEADERS OF THE WOMEN, YOUTH, AND UNION ORGANIZATIONS TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS OF SECURITY IN THE CITY. SISSOKO ASKED LEADERS TO REMIND THEIR PEOPLE THAT THE POLICE WERE AN INSTITUTION OF THE STATE, RESPECT OF WHICH WAS AN OBLIGATION FOR ALL. HE SAID THAT PROVOCATIONS AND AGGRESSIONS AGAINST THE POLICE MUST GIVE WAY TO A CLIMATE OF COMPREHENSION SO THAT FORCES OF ORDER MAY ACCOMPLISH THEIR TASK. THE CONVENED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DERS IN TURN EMPHASIZED INSECURITY IN OUTLYING DISTRICTS WHILE POLICE CONCENTRATED THEIR ROUNDS IN NIGHT CLUBS AND CENTER CITY. THEY ALSO COMPLAINED OF POLICE HARASSMENT OF CYCLISTS AND MOTORISTS. THE POLICEMAN'S ROLE, THEY SAID, WAS TO MAKE ORDER RESPECTED, NOT TO BULLY PEACEFUL CITIZENS. SISSOKO LATER ASKED LABOR UNION OFFICIALS TO ENCOURAGE RANK AND FILE TO RESPECT POLICE AND THEN MET WITH POLICE TO WARN THEM OF PRACTICES WHICH GAVE MALIAN POLICE A TROUBLESOME REPUTATION.

6. MUG SHOTS. OFFICIAL DAILY L'ESSOR, MEANWHILE, MAINTAINED PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST COUP PLOTTERS BY PUBLISHING SERIALS ON FRONT PAGE, MUG SHOTS OF THE "BAND OF THREE" AND THEIR ACCOMPLICES. MARCH 29 EDITION CARRIED PRESIDENTIAL DECREES DE GRADING 33 MILITARY OFFICERS, INCLUDING EX-FOREIGN MINISTER CHARLES SAMBA CISYYKHO, TO RANKS OF SOLDIER-SECOND CLASS, POLICE CADET, OR GUARDIAN OF THE PEACE, AND STRIPPING MANY OFFICERS OF NATIONAL HONORS PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED. (END UNCLASSIFIED)

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7. COMMENT. PRESIDENT'S INTERVIEW SHOWS HIM DETERMINED TO CON-

TINUE THE PROCESS OF RESTORING ELECTIVE POLITICS BUT CURRENTLY
HAMPERED BY LACK OF TRUSTWORTHY, COMPETENT SUBORDINATES. MANY
TOP POSITIONS ARE NOW BEING SUPERVISED BY INTERIM APPOINTEES.

8. MEETING CHAIRED BY SECRETARY-GENERAL SISSOKO REVEAL THAT CMLN
IS CONCERNED ABOUT DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION EVIDENCED
BY CITIZEN'S DISRESPECT FOR POLICE. SINCE FORMER POLICE CHIEFS
ARE DAILY IMPUGNED IN MEDIA, MALIAN CITIZENS HAVE LITTLE PATIENCE
WITH PETTY POLICE HARASSMENT. SOME POLICE STOPPING MOTORCYCLISTS
HAVE BEEN ASSAULTED. VERBAL ABUSE OF POLICE IS INCREASINGLY
COMMON. NOW THAT TOUGH, BRUTAL REGIME OF SECURITY DIRECTOR
BAGAYOKO IS OVERTHROWN, MALIANS WANT POLICE PROTECTION, NOT
ABUSE AND HARASSMENT. IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT AN OPEN
DISCUSSION OF POLICE BEHAVIOR WAS UNTHINKABLE DURING BAGAYOKO'S
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REIGN.

9. UNFORTUNATELY, MALIAN POLICE SEEM MORE ADEPT AT HARASSING
DRIVERS THAN AT MAINTAINING ORDER IN OUTLYING CITY DISTRICTS.
POLICE CHECKS ARE STILL COMMON. MEANWHILE, MALIANS ARE INCREASINGLY
CONCERNED THAT CHANGE IN POLICE LEADERSHIP BRING CHANGE IN POLICE
ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR. MALIAN GOVERNMENT FACES DIFFICULT TASK
OF REPUDIATING FORMER POLICE AND SECURITY OFFICIALS WHILE
RETAINING ENOUGH RESPECT FOR POLICE TO MAKE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER
POSSIBLE.
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